Project Censored's Top 25 News Stories

The team from Project Censored once again highlights the most important national and global news stories of the past 18 months that received little or no coverage by the US corporate media.

Compiled by
Project Censored © 2009
Sonoma State University
1801 East Cotati Avenue
Rohnert Park, CA 94928, USA
Telephone: +1 (707) 664 2500
Email: censored@sonoma.edu
Website: www.projectcensored.org

Each year, the Project Censored team from Sonoma State University, California, selects and evaluates thousands of published news stories by journalists working in the national and international mainstream as well as the alternative press. Students, faculty staff and community experts participate in this process, which ultimately decides on the top 25 stories that were the most underreported by the US corporate media. Following is an edited summary of Project Censored's 2008–09 selection. To see the full report with sources, references and updates, visit the web page http://www.projectcensored.org/top-stories/category/two-thousand-and-ten-book/. — Editor

1. US Congress Sells Out to Wall Street

Federal lawmakers responsible for overseeing the US economy have received millions of dollars from Wall Street firms. Since 2001, eight of the most troubled firms have donated US$64.2 million to congressional and presidential candidates and the Republican and Democratic parties. As senators, Barack Obama and John McCain received a combined total of $3.1 million. The donors include investment bankers Bear Stearns, Goldman Sachs, Lehman Brothers, Merrill Lynch and Morgan Stanley, insurer American International Group and mortgage giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

Some of the top recipients of contributions from companies receiving Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) money are the same members of Congress who chair committees charged with regulating the financial sector and overseeing the effectiveness of this unprecedented government program. In total, members of the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, the Senate Finance Committee and the House Financial Services Committee received $5.2 million from TARP recipients in the 2007–2008 election cycle. President Obama collected at least $4.3 million from employees at these companies for his presidential campaign. Nearly every member of the House Financial Services Committee, who in February 2009 oversaw hearings on how the $700 billion of TARP bail-out was being spent, received contributions associated with these financial institutions during the 2008 election cycle.

In 2004, when the US Securities and Exchange Commission adopted a major rule change that freed investment banks to plunge tens of billions of dollars in borrowed money into sub-prime mortgages and other risky plays, congressional banking committees held no oversight hearings. Congressional inaction also allowed mortgage agents to earn high fees for peddling loans to unqualified homebuyers and prevented states from toughening regulations on predatory lending practices.

By early 2009, a whole series of new government operations had been invented to inject cash into the economy, most of them under the completely secretive control of the financial sector.

2. US Schools More Segregated Today than in 1950s

Schools in the United States are more segregated today than they have been in more than four decades. Millions of non-white students are locked into "dropout factory" high schools, where huge percentages do not graduate and few are well prepared for college or a future in the US economy.

According to a new Civil Rights Project report published at the University of California, Los Angeles, schools in the US are 44 per cent non-white and minorities are rapidly emerging as the majority of public school students. Latinos and blacks, the two largest minority groups, attend schools more segregated today than during the civil rights movement 40 years ago. In Latino and African-American populations, two of every five students attend intensely segregated schools. For Latinos, this increase in segregation reflects growing residential segregation. For blacks, a significant part of the reversal reflects the ending of desegregation plans in public schools throughout the nation.

The Civil Rights Project study shows that the most severe segregation in public schools is in the western states, including California—not in the South, as many people believe.

3. Poaching, Toxic Waste Dumping and Somali Piracy

The international community has come out in force to condemn and declare war on the Somali fishermen pirates, while discreetly protecting the illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fleets from around the world that have been poaching and dumping toxic waste in Somali waters since the fall of the Somali government 18 years ago. In 1991, foreign interests seized the opportunity to begin looting the country's food supply and using its unguarded waters as a dumping ground for nuclear and other toxic waste.

According to the High Seas Task Force (HSTF), there were over 800 IUU fishing vessels in Somali waters at one time in 2005, taking advantage of Somalia's inability to police and control its own waters and fishing grounds. The IUUs poach an estimated US$450 million in seafood from Somali waters annually. In so doing, they steal an invaluable protein source from some of the world's poorest people and ruin the livelihoods of legitimate fishermen.

Allegations of the dumping of toxic waste, as well as illegal fishing, had been circulating since the early 1990s, but hard evidence emerged when the 2004 tsunami hit the country. The United Nations Environment Program reported that the tsunami washed rusting containers of toxic waste onto the shores of Puntland, northern Somalia.

The UN has disregarded its own findings and has ignored Somali and international appeals to act on the continued ravaging of Somali marine resources and dumping of toxic wastes. Violations have also been largely ignored by the region's maritime authorities.

4. Nuclear Waste Pools in North Carolina

One of the most lethal patches of ground in North America is located in the backwoods of North Carolina, where the Shearon Harris nuclear plant is housed and owned by Progress Energy. The plant contains the largest radioactive waste storage pools in the country. It is not just a nuclear-power-generating station but also a repository for highly radioactive spent fuel rods from two other nuclear plants. The rods are transported by rail and stored in four densely packed pools filled with circulating cold water to keep the waste from heating. The Department of Homeland Security has marked Shearon Harris as one of the most vulnerable terrorist targets in the nation.

> **Should the cooling system malfunction, the resulting fire would be virtually unquenchable and could trigger a nuclear meltdown...**

The threat exists, however, without the speculation of terrorist attack. Should the cooling system malfunction, the resulting fire would be virtually unquenchable and could trigger a nuclear meltdown, putting more than 200 million residents in extreme peril. A recent study by Brookhaven Lab estimates that a pool fire could cause 140,000 cancers, contaminate thousands of square miles of land and cause over US$500 billion in off-site property damage.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has estimated that there is a 1:100 chance of a pool fire happening under the best of scenarios. Between 1999 and 2003, there were 12 major problems requiring the shutdown of the Shearon Harris plant. According to the NRC, the national average for commercial reactors is one shutdown per 18 months.

5. Europe Blocks US Toxic Products

US deregulation of toxic substances, such as lead in lipsticks, mercury in electronics, and phthalates (endocrine disruptors) in toys, may pose not only disastrous consequences to our health but also to America's economic and political status in the world.

International markets are moving toward a European model of insisting on environmental and consumer safety. A Europe-led revolution in chemical regulation, which requires that thousands of chemicals finally be assessed for their potentially toxic effects on humans and the environment, signals the end of US industry's ability to withhold critical data from the public.

Dangerous chemicals have been identified via the

European Union's 2007 Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) law, which requires the disclosure of all chemicals sold in the EU in quantities of more than one metric ton per year. Of the 267 chemicals on the potential REACH list, only one-third have ever been tested by the US Environmental Protection Agency and only two are regulated in any form under US law.

6. Lobbyists Buy Congress

According to a study by The Center for Responsive Politics, special interests paid Washington lobbyists US$3.2 billion in 2008—more than in any other year on record. This was a 13.7 per cent increase from 2007 (which broke the record by 7.7 per cent over 2006).

Health interests spent more on federal lobbying than any other economic sector. Their $478.5 million guaranteed the crown for the third year, with the finance, insurance and real estate sector a runner-up, spending $453.5 million. The pharmaceutical/health products industry contributed $230.9 million, raising their last-11-year total to over $1.6 billion. The second-biggest spender among industries was electric utilities, which spent $156.7 million on lobbying, followed by insurance, which spent $153.2 million, and oil and gas, which paid $133.2 million. Pro-Israel groups, food processing companies and the oil and gas industry increased their expenditures the most (as a percentage) between 2007 and 2008. Finance, insurance and real estate companies have been competing to get a piece of the $700 billion bail-out package which Congress approved in late 2008.

This all speaks to the fact that the governmental-military-industrial organism is a symbiotic union of self-interest, greed and lust for power on a level never before seen in history.

7. Obama's Military Appointees Have Corrupt Past

President Obama's retention of Robert Gates as Secretary of Defense makes Gates the first appointee from an outgoing administration of the opposing party to be kept in the position. Over the last two years of the previous administration, Gates was a key implementer of President George W. Bush's Iraq War "surge"—after he replaced Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who had opposed the escalation.

Obama's appointees to the Department of Defense and to National Intelligence embody many of the worst elements of US national security policy over the past three decades. The valued "decades of experience" these leaders bring are filled with ethical breaches, lies to Congress, deep conflicts of interest and revolving doors within the US military-industrial complex.

On January 21, 2009, Obama signed an executive order that issued more stringent ethics rules prohibiting lobbyists from serving in agencies they have lobbied in the previous two years. Just two days later, the White House announced that these rules wouldn't apply to the nominee for Deputy Secretary of Defense, William Lynn. He was Senior Vice President for Government Operations and Strategy at defence giant Raytheon and a registered Raytheon lobbyist until July 2008.

Also newly appointed, Robert Hale, Undersecretary of Defense (Comptroller), served as Assistant Secretary of the Air Force in the role of Financial Comptroller from 1994 to 2001. He was responsible, along with Lynn, for the management of Department of Defense funds.

Admiral Dennis Blair, Obama's pick to head National Intelligence, which oversees all 16 intelligence agencies, was Commander of Military Forces in the Pacific under President Clinton. He played a critical role in backing the Indonesian occupation of East Timor after the US-backed dictator Suharto fell in 1998.

This all speaks to the fact that the governmental-military-industrial organism is a symbiotic union of self-interest, greed and lust for power on a level never before seen in history.

8. Bailed-out Banks and America's Wealthiest Cheat IRS

A 2008 study by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) reported that 83 of the top publicly held US companies have operations in offshore tax havens. Fourteen of these companies, including AIG, Bank of America and Citigroup, received money from the government bail-out.

The GAO also reported that activities of the Union Bank of Switzerland (UBS) are directly connected to tax avoidance. UBS has enabled wealthy Americans to use tax schemes—some of which are illegal—to cheat the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) out of over US$20 billion in recent years, according to the Department of Justice. A sponsor of the prestigious Art Basel Miami Beach show, UBS uses the show to find clients looking for advice on tax shelters and how to take advantage of bank secrecy rules.

For corporations, the process of geographic tax avoidance is fairly simple. A US corporation will sell at reduced rates, even at a loss to their own offshore

subsidiaries, and then resell the products at higher prices, paying little or no taxes in the foreign country.

In December 2008, the New York–based bank holding company Goldman Sachs reported its first quarterly loss and then issued a statement that its tax rate was dropping from 34.1 to 1.0 per cent. The company, which received $10 billion and debt guarantees from the US government in October 2008, expects to pay only $14 million in taxes worldwide for 2008 compared with $6 billion for 2007. It cited "changes in geographic earnings mix" as the reason for the decrease.

In an update, Rachel Keeler of *Dollars & Sense* noted: "The G-20 meetings in April of 2009 declared a crackdown on tax havens as the first step to financial recovery. However, the offshore banking world now harbours $11.5 trillion in individual wealth alone, and many countries will continue to resist regulation and inspections from outside their borders."

9. US Arms Used for War Crimes in Gaza

Israel's repeated firing of US-made white phosphorus shells over densely populated areas of Gaza during its recent military campaign was indiscriminate and is evidence of war crimes, said Human Rights Watch in a report, "Rain of Fire", released on March 25, 2009. The report provides witness accounts of the devastating effects that white phosphorus munitions had on civilians and property in Gaza. Human Rights Watch researchers found spent shells, canister liners and dozens of burnt felt wedges containing white phosphorus on city streets, apartment roofs and residential courtyards as well as at a UN school in Gaza immediately after hostilities ended in January.

The devastating Israeli firepower, unleashed largely on Palestinian civilians in Gaza during the three-week attack starting on December 27, 2008, was fuelled by US-supplied weapons paid for with US tax dollars.

The UN Security Council, Amnesty International, the International Red Cross and voices of protest from around the world demanded a ceasefire. Yet, with shocking lack of regard, both houses of US Congress overwhelmingly endorsed resolutions to support a continuation of Israel's "self-defence".

Yet, with shocking lack of regard, both houses of US Congress overwhelmingly endorsed resolutions to support a continuation of Israel's "self-defence".

10. Ecuador Declares Foreign Debt Illegitimate

In November 2008, Ecuador became the first country to undertake an examination of the legitimacy and structure of its foreign debt. An independent debt audit documented hundreds of allegations of irregularity, illegality and illegitimacy in contracts of debt to predatory international lenders. The loans violated Ecuador's domestic laws, US Securities and Exchange Commission regulations and general principles of international law. Ecuador's use of legitimacy as a legal argument for defaulting set a major precedent.

The country's debt rose from $1.174 billion in 1970 to over $14.250 billion in 2006, a 12-fold increase, due in large part to interest rates that rose at the discretion of US banks and the Federal Reserve from six per cent in 1979 to 21 per cent in 1981. Salomon Smith Barney, now part of Citigroup, issued unauthorised restructuring of Ecuador's debt in 2000 that led to exorbitant interest rates, which combined with illegal borrowing by former dictators has turned the country into a major capital exporter to its northern "benefactors".

11. Corporations Profit from Occupation of Palestine

Israeli and international corporations are directly involved in the occupation of Palestine. These occupying companies lead real estate deals, develop the Israeli colonies and infrastructure, and contribute to the construction and operation of an ethnic separation system including checkpoints, walls and roads. They also supply equipment used in the control and repression of civilians.

The ongoing business of construction in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Golan Heights includes housing developments and extensive infrastructure projects such as roads and water systems for the exclusive use of Israeli settlers, on lands confiscated from Palestinians. While the US government has on numerous occasions affirmed the illegality of Israeli settlements on Palestinian land, it encourages American support by providing tax deductions for donations to these settlements, which have nearly doubled within a year and are rapidly accelerating.

Extensive grassroots research is being conducted by the Israeli group Coalition of Women for Peace.

12. Mysterious Death of Karl Rove's Election Thief

Karl Rove's chief IT consultant Mike Connell—who was facing subpoena in connection with presidential election fraud in Ohio in 2004—mysteriously died in a private plane crash in 2008. Connell was allegedly the central figure in a longstanding plot to electronically flip votes to Republicans. In July 2008, he was named as a key witness in the case filed against Ohio Secretary of State J. Kenneth Blackwell on August 31, 2006 by Columbus attorneys Clifford Arnebeck and Robert Fitrakis. The case took on fresh momentum in July 2008 when Arnebeck announced a new filing, inspired in part by the coming forward of GOP IT security expert Stephen Spoonamore, who said he was prepared to testify to the plausibility of

electronic vote-rigging having been carried out in 2004.

Spoonamore testified that the "vote tabulation system [which Connell designed] allowed the introduction of an additional single computer between computer A and computer B". He said: "This centralized collection of all incoming statewide tabulations would make it easy for a single operator, or a preprogrammed 'force balancing computer', to change the results in any way desired by the team controlling the computer C."

Arnebeck presents evidence that Karl Rove threatened Connell, cautioning him that if he didn't "take the fall" for election fraud in Ohio he would face prosecution for supposed lobby law violations.

Connell was an experienced pilot. His plane had been recently serviced. He had been in the nation's capital on still-unknown business before his single-engine plane crashed on December 22, 2008, just three miles short of the runway in Akron, Ohio. The cause of the crash remains unknown.

13. Katrina's Hidden Race War

A shocking report in *The Nation* magazine exposes how white vigilante groups patrolled the streets of New Orleans after hurricane Katrina, shooting at least 11 African-American men.

While most of New Orleans was deluged, word spread that Algiers Point was dry. The National Guard designated the Algiers Point ferry landing an official evacuation site. Facing an influx of refugees, a group of heavily armed white residents sought to seal the area and rid the neighbourhood of "those who didn't belong". As the government collapsed, the city fractured along racial lines. Algiers Point is largely white, while the rest of Algiers is predominantly black.

While the media portrayed African-Americans as looters and thugs, it is now clear that the most serious crimes were committed by gun-toting white males. Local police have never conducted investigations. So far, the crimes have gone unpunished.

14. Congress Invested in Defence Contracts

The nonpartisan Center for Responsive Politics has calculated that more than 151 members of Congress have up to US$195 million invested in major defence contractors that are earning profits from the US military occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

When General David Petraeus, the top US military officer in Iraq, briefed Congress in April 2008, he was addressing lawmakers who had a lot more than just a political stake in the Iraq occupation. Along with their colleagues in the House and the Senate, the politicians who got a status report from the General and the US Ambassador to Iraq had millions of dollars of their own money invested in companies doing business with the Department of Defense. The investment portfolios include holdings in companies paid billions of dollars each month to support America's military. These companies provide almost everything the military uses, from aircraft and weapons to medical supplies and soft drinks.

15. World Bank Carbon Trade Fiasco

The World Bank is brokering carbon emission trading arrangements that destroy indigenous farmlands around the world. The Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) investment has become a means by which industrialised countries avoid reducing their own emissions through the implementation of "emissions reduction" projects in developing nations.

Many governments have established caps, or limits, on greenhouse gas emissions that can be produced in their countries. Industries can respond to these government-imposed limits by responsibly reducing their emissions, or they can bypass this process entirely by purchasing "carbon credits" from other industries in other parts of the world, who, through CDM investment brokered by the World Bank, trade emission reduction "credits" in order to "offset" excessive emissions. While the World Bank claims that this system "supports sustainable development...and benefits the poorer communities of the developing world", the program has become little more than a corporate profit-boosting enterprise.

While the World Bank claims that this system "supports sustainable development... and benefits the poorer communities...", the program has become little more than a corporate profit-boosting enterprise.

16. US Repression of Haiti Continues

The US government plans to expropriate and demolish the homes of hundreds of Haitians in the shantytown of Cité Soleil to expand the occupying UN force's military base. The US government contractor DynCorp, a quasi-official arm of the Pentagon and the CIA, is responsible for the base expansion and has been awarded US$5 million in contracts. The base will house soldiers of the UN Mission to Stabilize Haiti (MINUSTAH). Cité Soleil is the most bullet-ridden battleground of the foreign military occupation, which began after US Special Forces

kidnapped and exiled President Jean-Bertrand Aristide on February 29, 2004. Citizens have since been victimised by recurring massacres at the hands of MINUSTAH.

The State Department's US Agency for International Development (USAID) provided funding for the base expansion—a very unorthodox use of development aid.

Lawyer Evel Fanfan, the president of the Association of University Graduates Motivated for a Haiti with Rights (AUMOHD), says that about 155 buildings would be razed as the base expansion moves forward. As of March 2009, 80 homes have been demolished.

17. The ICC Facilitates US Covert War in Sudan

The USA promoted the International Criminal Court's (ICC's) indictment of Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir for war crimes in Darfur in order to justify continuing western exploitation and military interventions in the resource-rich region.

"America is an opportunist country," said the Sudanese Ambassador to the UN, Abdalmahmood Abdalhaleem Mohamad, at a United Nations press conference. "They want to use the ICC without being a party to it." When asked why his country was being singled out, he said that western nations are eyeing Sudan's newly discovered oil riches.

Western nations have been marginalised in the region, in terms of both oil exploration and arms supplies, by China, which in recent years has become one of Sudan's closest political, economic and military allies. Mohamad said the US, UK and France harbour "a desire to revive their colonial dreams in Sudan".

The ICC was used in the strategy to turn world opinion against al-Bashir and the government of Sudan and to further divide and destabilise the region. The legitimacy of the Court is being questioned as it shows itself to be a tool of western hegemony.

18. Ecuador's Constitutional Rights of Nature

In September 2008, Ecuador became the first country to declare constitutional rights to nature, thus codifying a new system of environmental protection. Reflecting the beliefs and traditions of Ecuador's indigenous peoples, the new constitution declares that nature "has the right to exist, persist, maintain and regenerate its vital cycles, structure, functions and its processes in evolution". It redefines people's relationship with nature by asserting that nature is not an object to be appropriated and exploited but is a rights-bearing entity that should be treated with parity under the law.

Ecuador's leadership may have a global domino effect. However, for all of the hope and tangible progress that the Rights of Nature articles represent, there are shortcomings and contradictions with the laws and the political reality on the ground. A fundamental flaw exists due to President Rafael Correa's refusal to include a clause mandating free, prior and informed consent by communities for development projects that would affect their local ecosystems. The new mining law, introduced by Correa and backed by Canadian companies, would allow for large-scale open-pit metal mining in pristine Andean highlands and Amazon rainforest.

19. Bank Bail-out Recipients Spent to Defeat Labour

On October 17, 2008, three days after it received US$25 billion in federal bail-out funds, Bank of America hosted a conference call to organise opposition to the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA). Participants, including the insurer AIG, were urged to persuade their clients to send "large contributions" to groups working against the EFCA as well as to vulnerable Senate Republicans who could be used to help block the passage of the pro-labour bill that would make it easier for employees to organise into unions.

According to journalist Sam Stein, reform groups are sending letters to congressional committee chairs and the head of the Congressional Oversight Panel, urging an investigation into whether bail-out recipients used taxpayer money to benefit political candidates or organisations.

20. Secret Control of Presidential Debates

The Obama and McCain campaigns jointly negotiated a detailed secret contract dictating the terms of the 2008 debates. This included who got to participate, what topics were to be raised and the structure of the debates.

Since 1987, a private corporation created by and for the Republican and Democratic parties, called the Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD), has sponsored the US presidential debates and implemented debate contracts. In order to shield the major party candidates from criticism, CPD has refused to release debate contract information to the public.

Since the CPD took control, presidential debates have been primarily funded by corporate contributions. Multinationals with regulatory interests before Congress have donated millions of dollars to the CPD, and debate sites have become corporate carnivals where sponsoring companies market their products, services and political agendas. Frank Fahrenkopf and Paul Kirk, who co-chair and control the CPD, are registered lobbyists for multinational corporations. Author George Farah points

...the new constitution declares that nature "has the right to exist, persist, maintain and regenerate its vital cycles, structure, functions and its processes in evolution".

out that "Kirk and Fahrenkopf's lobbying practices demonstrate a willingness to protect corporate interests at the expense of voters' interests".

The current structure enables corporations to give money to both the Democratic and Republican parties, which essentially supports their duopoly over the political process and excludes third-party voices that may be hostile to corporate power.

21. Recession Causes States to Cut Welfare

Many states are in the midst of aggressive action to push thousands of eligible mothers off Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), traditionally known as welfare. Families are being denied aid so that savings can be redirected in state budgets.

Nationally, the number of welfare recipients fell more than 40 per cent between 2001 and June 2008. Louisiana, Texas and Illinois have each dropped 80 per cent of adult recipients since January 2001. Georgia had a 90 per cent drop, with fewer than 2,500 adults receiving benefits, down from 28,000 in 2004.

In 2006, the Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence conducted a survey to find out why so many women were suddenly failing to get benefits. They discovered that caseworkers actively discouraged women from applying and reportedly told applicants they would have to be surgically sterilised before they could apply for TANF. Disabled women were told they couldn't apply because they didn't meet work requirements. Others were warned that the state could take their children if they applied for benefits. Women are increasingly vulnerable to sexual assault and exploitation—sometimes by the state officials or caseworkers assigned to help them. Arrests of women for prostitution and petty crime went up as more and more families were denied welfare.

22. Obama's Trilateral Commission Team

President Barack Obama appointed 11 members of the Trilateral Commission to top-level and key positions in his administration within his first 10 days in office. This represents a very narrow source of international leadership inside the administration.

Obama was groomed for the presidency by key members of the Trilateral Commission. Most notably, Zbigniew Brzezinski, co-founder of the Trilateral Commission with David Rockefeller in 1973, has been Obama's principal foreign policy adviser.

According to official Trilateral Commission membership lists, there are only 87 members from the USA (the other 337 members are from other countries). Thus, within two weeks of Obama's inauguration, his appointments encompassed more than 12 per cent of the Commission's entire US membership.

Trilateral appointees include: Secretary of the Treasury, Tim Geithner; Ambassador to the United Nations, Susan Rice; National Security Advisor, Gen. James L. Jones; Deputy National Security Advisor, Thomas Donilon; Chairman, Economic Recovery Advisory Board, Paul Volcker; Director of National Intelligence, Admiral Dennis C. Blair; Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Kurt M. Campbell; Deputy Secretary of State, James Steinberg; State Department Special Envoy, Richard Haass; State Department Special Envoy, Dennis Ross; and State Department Special Envoy, Richard Holbrooke.

The originally stated purpose of the Trilateral Commission was to create a "New International Economic Order". Its current statement has morphed into fostering "closer cooperation among these core democratic industrialized areas of the world with shared leadership responsibilities in the wider international system".

Obama was groomed for the presidency by key members of the Trilateral Commission. Most notably, Zbigniew Brzezinski...has been Obama's principal foreign policy adviser.

23. Activists Slam Water Forum

Water rights activists blasted the World Water Forum, held in Turkey in late March 2009, as a corporate trade show promoting the privatisation of water. The forum opened with police firing tear gas and detaining protesters shouting "Water for life, not for profit".

According to its website, the World Water Forum is "an open, all-inclusive, multi-stakeholder process" where governments, NGOs, businesses and others "create links, debate and attempt to find solutions to achieve water security". However, the Forum's main organiser, the World Water Council, is dominated by two of the world's largest private water corporations, Suez and Veolia Water. Critics contend that the Council's links to Suez and Veolia, as well as the large representation of the business industry, compromise its legitimacy. Corporate interests that make up the World Water Council are in constant contact with the World Bank and other financial institutions. The Council promotes extraordinarily

Continued on page 79

Continued from page 19

expensive and destructive dam and water diversion projects as well as public-private partnerships (PPPs) that put water services under private ownership. PPPs in Argentina, Bolivia, El Salvador, the USA and other countries have resulted in huge price hikes, water pollution, depletion and cut-offs.

This year's Forum issued a communiqué that describes access to water as a "basic human need" rather than a human right, despite efforts by dissenting Latin American countries, France and Spain to introduce the right to water. They were reportedly blocked by Egypt, Brazil and the USA.

24. Dollar Glut Finances US Military Expansion

The worldwide surplus of US dollars is forcing foreign central banks to bear the costs of America's expanding military empire. Keeping international reserves in "dollars" means that when US financial speculation and deficit payments pump "paper" into foreign economies, these banks have little option but to recycle it into US Treasury bills and bonds—which the Treasury then spends on financing an enormous, hostile military build-up to encircle the major dollar-recyclers: China, Japan and Arab OPEC oil producers.

The largest, most important foreign entities putting "their money" into the US are central banks, and it is not their money at all. They are sending back the dollars that foreign exporters and other recipients turn over to their central banks for domestic currency.

The US economy can create dollars freely, now that they no longer are convertible into gold or even into purchases of US companies. Consequently, the US remains the world's most protected economy.

25. Fast-tracked Oil Exploitation in Western Amazon

The western Amazon, home to the most biodiverse and intact rainforest on Earth, may soon be covered with oil rigs and pipelines. Vast swaths of the region are to be opened for oil and gas exploration, putting some of the planet's most pristine and biodiverse forests at risk, conservationists have warned.

A new study has found that at least 35 multinational oil and gas companies operate over 180 oil and gas "blocks" (areas zoned for exploration and development) which now cover the Amazon in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and western Brazil.

The western Amazon is also home to many indigenous ethnic groups, including some of the world's last uncontacted peoples living in voluntary isolation.

Growing global demand is stimulating unprecedented levels of new oil and gas exploration and extraction—and the threat of environmental and cultural devastation. ∞

NAZI SECRET WEAPONS

REICH OF THE BLACK SUN

Nazi Secret Weapons & the Cold War Allied Legend

by Joseph P. Farrell

Why were the Allies worried about an atom bomb attack by the Germans in 1944? Why did Hitler in 1945 insist that holding Prague could win the war for the Third Reich? Why did US General George Patton's Third Army race for the Skoda works at Pilsen in Czechoslovakia instead of Berlin? Why did the US Army not test the uranium atom bomb it dropped on Hiroshima? Why did the Luftwaffe fly a non-stop round trip mission to within twenty miles of New York City in 1944? Arguing that Nazi Germany actually won the race for the atom bomb in late 1944, this book explores the even more secretive research the Nazis were conducting into the occult, alternative physics and new energy sources.

To order, visit:
www.nexusmagazine.com